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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
19 June 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Possible Successor to Macmillan

1. The Conservative Party's lukewarm support for Macmillan in the parliamentary debate on the Profumo scandal is widely interpreted to mean that the Prime Minister will feel obliged to resign shortly. The most likely time for his resignation would be after Parliament rises for its summer recess in early August. This would serve a double purpose, giving party leaders time to look over the field of possible successors and permit the Prime Minister a graceful exit. Whatever new leader is chosen, the Conservatives would need time to build up his political stature before general elections, which are mandatory by October 1964.

2. While Macmillan's resignation would technically leave the field wide open for a successor, those who could seriously be considered as having a serious chance for the post are few and probably no more than five: R.A. Butler, Reginald Maudling, Iain Macleod, Viscount Hailsham and Edward Heath.

3. Possible Successors:

Reginald Maudling: 46 years old, Chancellor of the Exchequer, is considered by some to have the best chance of succeeding Macmillan, largely as a result of recent drops in the stock of some other candidates. His relative youth, acclaim for his recent budget and signs of renewed economic vitality have also improved his chances.

Iain Macleod: the 50 year old leader of the party in Commons and co-chairman of the party organization, is greatly admired by the young Tories. Intelligent and imaginative, he believes there is no future for his party if it is reactionary. He is

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experienced and well-informed on social questions and has done much to educate his colleagues on these issues. He has been blamed for recent by-election reverses, however, and seems to be in eclipse as an immediate successor to Macmillan.

R.A. Butler: the 61 year old deputy Prime Minister is the most logical candidate to succeed Macmillan. He is by far the most skillful and experienced politician in the government. Butler is not the most popular with the party's right wing, however, although many Conservatives would prefer to see him serve as Prime Minister until the party can make up its mind which of the new men now in their forties possess the strongest qualities for future leadership.

Viscount Hailsham: the 57 year old Minister for Science and leader of the House of Lords has a reputation for evangelical fervor when it comes to party matters. He has alienated some elements in the party by his occasional tactlessness. Although not disqualified because of membership in the House of Lords, since the beginning of this century custom has dictated the selection of a Prime Minister from the ranks of the Commons. His selection would depend on the House of Lords reform bill being enacted this session. The bill allows peers to give up their titles and stand for Commons.

Edward Heath: 47 years old, Lord Privy Seal and chief Common Market negotiator, had been considered by many as Macmillan's personal choice as an eventual successor and was reportedly soon to be moved from his present post to one--possibly Foreign Secretary--where he could gain more political stature. Recent revelations of homosexuality in government, however, have made the Conservatives quite gun-shy about bachelors.

4. The final choice of a party leader is likely to be influenced in part by the fact that both the Labor and Liberal parties are led by men in their forties and many in the Conservative party might prefer that candidates now in their fifties and sixties be by-passed. It is doubtful that Macmillan's successor, whoever he may be, will introduce major innovations in foreign and domestic policies until after the general elections. However, in view of the commanding lead which opinion polls now give Labor, the new Tory leader will be under strong pressure to find a winning issue before these elections.